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### Thermal imaging targets dangerous trucks

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CTV.ca News Staff

The use of thermal imaging is helping police in Alberta take dangerous trucks off the road, a new technology that could reduce the number of accidents caused by such

unsafe commercial vehicles.

The new technology is helping officers to use more than just their eyes and instincts to figure out which trucks should be pulled over and inspected.

Unmarked vans carrying cameras are parked along the side of busy highways. The cameras are then placed near the pavement to capture thermal images of the wheels and axles of passing trucks.

Inside the van, an officer checks the images on a screen and can determine whether the vehicle should be stopped based on specific heat patterns. Braking generates heat, so a lack of heat in a braking system indicates brake failure.

While it is primarily used to detect bad brakes, the thermal imaging inspection system can also help to identify other wheel and tire-related issues like under-inflated tires.

Transport Officer Karl Samuels knows first-hand how effective the technology can be.

"It won't tell you the pressure, but it'll tell if the pressure is low. It will tell you if a load on a unit is really heavy because the tires will start to glow," Samuels told CTV News.

If the imaging system shows a problem, Samuels radios ahead to a check stop a short distance away, where a more thorough inspection is conducted.

Samuels says there haven't been any vehicles he has pulled over that didn't have something wrong with them.

Alberta's Thermal Eye Technologies helped develop -- and now designs and engineers -- inspection systems, and Calgary is the first Canadian city to begin using the technology.


Thermal Eye says the thermal inspection system has a 98 per cent accuracy rate in identifying trucks with bad brakes.

Similar thermal imaging systems have been tested recently by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and were found to be effective in detecting brake problems.

In those studies, 59 per cent of commercial vehicles identified as having problems were taken out of service for brake violations, and other repairs







#### VIDEO

 CTV News: Sarah Galashan on the new safety device 1:43

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were often needed.

So while the technology has been providing encouraging results, the discouraging news may be just how many unsafe commercial vehicles are travelling on Canadian roads.

*With a report from CTV's Sarah Galashan*

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